MEMORIAL ADDRESS

—OF—

W. A. JOHNSON

—TO THE—

CITIZENS OF COLONY,

KANSAS.

Delivered May 30, 1902.

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—AT—

Colony, Kansas, May 30, 1902,

BY W. A. JOHNSON.

COMRADES:—We have assembled to commemorate with solemn rites a sacred anniversary; to honor heroic deeds of heroic men. Turning aside from our various vocations of life, we are come to devote this day to patriotic meditation, and recollections of heroes, and heroic associations which throng around us from a past as glorious as that of ancient Greece, or imperial Rome.

On the 15th day of April, 1861, when Abraham Lincoln, as president of this great nation, issued his proclamation calling attention to our insulted flag, a million patriots arose as one man and rallied around the standard of their imperial government. Men imbued with patriotic impulses—heroic, brave, and actuated by no mercenary motives, no hope of spoils, no war of conquest, no hatred of hereditary foe to nerve their arms to battle, or inspire them to deeds of valor; they met, face to face, men brave and chivalric and determined as they. They conquered because they fought for justice, and for the very life of the grandest government the world has ever known.

From the many battle-fields come the memory of deeds immortal as those of Thermopylae or Marathon, or victories grander than the triumphs of Caesar, or Napoleon. History furnishes no parallel in patriotic endurance, or perfection of military discipline, in unfaltering courage and sublime devotion with which they offered their lives as a sacrifice upon the altar of their country.

The hearts of the generations that shall follow us, and direct the affairs of this government will swell at the contemplation of their heroic self devotion, of their sacrifices, their sufferings, and guard with jealous care their sacred tombs.

"Nor shall their glory be forgot
While fame her record keeps,
Or honor points the hallowed spot
Where valor proudly sleeps;
Nor wreck, nor change, nor winters blight
Nor times remorseless doom
Can dim one ray of holy light
That gilds their glorious tomb."

On the 4th day of July, 1776, the members of the Continental Congress signed the Declaration of Independence, which was proclaimed from Independence Hall, in the City of Philadelphia, wherein they declare that: "These colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states." It is the grandest, broadest and most profound document that was ever announced by a representative people. By this declaration and its enforcement by strong arms, the colonies became free and independent. And upon the fundamental principles enunciated in this declaration the government of the United States was established, which included in its boundaries all the territory of the thirteen original

colonies, and new territory was acquired from time to time which was added to the government.

In 1789 a constitution was adopted. Its purpose and object was declared in the preamble in these words: "We the people, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America."

By the adoption of this constitution our forefathers had established one of the best free governments that ever existed among men, and one that had no parallel in history. Over this vast extent of territory that government formed in 1789 has extended, a government in which all men were declared to be free; yet the auction block of the man seller remained even under the shadow of our national capitol.

It was supposed by the framers of our government that this great evil would pass away through peaceable agencies, but in after time there arose a powerful body of men, headed by such men as Jefferson Davis, Alex Stevens, Ben Hill, Robert E, Lee, and many others of the same school, who for years had declared and insisted that their peculiar institution was sustained by divine law; *Blasphemy unparalleled*; Upon this altar of Baal, it was attempted to found an empire to extend all over the land. Time servers formed compromises to foster and build up the Evil Spirit. Our supreme court formed decisions to give it new strength.

Political parties fell down and worshiped it, saying: "Great is the God of slavery." The whole

nation forgetting the words of warning of Washington, Hamilton, Franklin and Jefferson, became involved and infected by the worship of the "golden calf." Then as in the days of Aaron, and the golden calf which he set up for worship hard by the mount where Moses was receiving the law, the Lord of hosts seems to have declared again in the muttering of 1860 and 1861: "Put every man his sword by his side and go in and out of the gate throughout the camp and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor."

Up to the presidential election in 1860, the slave power of the south aided by its northern allies had been able to control the elections for president, and thus secure the control of the government in the interests of the institution of slavery. The advocates of slavery in the northern states had been equally as violent in their abuse of men opposed to the extension of slavery as the slave-holders themselves, and thus when the slave-holding states were unable to control the election of chief magistrate, they at once began to plan the destruction of the government and to set up a government consisting of slave-holding states, the chief corner stone of which should be a perpetuation of the institution of slavery. Men who had been educated at government expense; men who had high and important offices in the government, who had sworn to sustain and uphold the constitution of the United States, and men occupying judicial and representative offices under the constitution, entered into the conspiracy to dissolve the union and destroy the government.

On the 17th day of December, 1860, a few

weeks after the national election, a convention of delegates of South Carolina met at Columbia, and on the 20th day of the month, unanimously passed and adopted an ordinance of secession, and the same was proclaimed amid the firing of artillery and ringing of the bells of the city and other violent demonstrations of approval by the citizens of that state. This ordinance of secession was followed by similar conventions in other slave states, so that on the 4th of March, 1861 most of the states south of Mason and Dixon's line had passed ordinances of secession, and were preparing as speedily as possible to resist all efforts to enforce the laws of the United States.

Within their territory, they attempted to establish a new government called the Confederate States of America; declared their independence and claimed all public property within the slave states; demanded the surrender of the forts and arsenals of the south, with all the stores, munitions, etc.

On the 14th day of April, 1861, the whole nation was startled by the announcement that the proud ensign of the nation had been lowered from the flag-staff of Fort Sumpter, and the gallant defenders of that garrison had been overpowered and forced to surrender after two days of fearful cannonading, a rebellious ensign fluttered as the emblem of the new nationality, over a national fortress from whence the American flag had been lowered. The news borne by the electric flash throughout the land was astounding and instantaneous; and men throughout the loyal states were soon clad in the panoply of war.

The first call for volunteers was made on the 15th day of April, 1861, the next day after Fort

Sumpter had surrendered. Recruiting camps were established immediately in every loyal state and the quota of men called for was filled with alacrity, and the noble, heroic sons of America volunteered, left home and friends, and went at their country's call to help suppress this most wicked and stupendous rebellion and imperiled their lives on the many battle-fields; in the prison pens of the south; on the march over mountains, rivers and in dismal swamps,

The secession movement from beginniug was an act of war.

Ordinances of secession immediately followed and sometimes preceded by the violent seizure and plunder of national property, and the forceable expulsion of the agents and officers of the federal government. From the very first, and at every step in its progress it was distinguished by active hostility and outrage, alike injurious to the nation, and insulting to the people of the loyal states. The national capitol was manaced and every avenue of approach for federal troops was attempted to be cut off. The free navigation of the great rivers, the arteries of commerce of the north and west, were obstructed, and the uprising government of the rebellious states had issued proclamations inviting freebooters of all the world to prey upon our national commerce.

The issue of war was forced upon the government; it had no other alternative but to call for volunteers to put down the rebellion, or to surrender to their wicked and unjust demands for a dissolution of the union, and compel rebels, traitors and conspirators by force to obey the laws and desist from their wicked attempts to establish a southern confederacy and withdraw from the gov-

ernment.

The contest on the part of the government was approached with deliberation in a spirit of patriotic duty to preserve the nation, its liberties and the happiness of its people. The voice of party was hushed, and the bitterness of former political contests was at once forgiven and forgotten by all patriots. They arose above party considerations, and there was but one party among loyal men, and that one party was for the government—for the Union, once and forever.

When the first gun was fired at Fort Sumpter it reverberated throughout the entire land. The loyal people of the north arose as one man and declared that the government must be sustained, and the honor of our flag preserved inviolate at any cost.

Although the events for several months previous were pregnant with danger, the government suffered much and waited long, and was slow to take offense, and incredulous to treason and danger. But when the dread appeal to arms was made, and the issue could be no longer avoided with honor or safety, the loyal men of the north abandoned the peaceful pursuits of life and devoted themselves to the service of their country.

All indications for months preceding the inauguration of President Lincoln, showed that the slave-holding states intended to attempt to destroy the national union by withdrawing their allegiance to the government, and to declare the union at an end; and that the territory including the slave states was not a part of the United States; and that the government had no control or juridsiction over their territory. There were many politicians

in the north who were in full sympathy with the rebellious south, and declared that if the south desired to withdraw from the Union it had a right to do so, and there was no power in the constitution to coerce a state into obedience to the laws and constitution; that the government was a kind of league or co-partnership and each state had a right to withdraw from the confederation or co-partnership at its pleasure, and there was no power in the constitution to prevent them from destroying the compact. And as soon as it became manifest that Abraham Lincoln and the loyal supporters of his administration held that there was authority to be found in the constitution to preserve the government, and that it would be done if it took all the power of the government and its loyal supporters to do so—at this resolve the rebels themselves gnashed their teeth in impotent rage over the proclamation, but they lost no time in declaring that it was only a proof of what they had always announced; that the President and all his supporters were not for the preservation of the Union, but the destruction of African slavery and the spoliation of the southern states. But they were not alone in these declarations; they had emmissaries in the border and other loyal states of the Union. The Knights of the Golden Circle, the Order of American Knights, or the Sons of Liberty, and other copperhead organizations tainted with more or less treason, stirred up all the old dregs of the pro-slavery feeling that could possibly be reached.

The Knights of the Golden Circle was the most extensive of the organizations referred to. It was an auxiliary force to the rebel army. It was pledged to use every possible means in its power to

aid the rebels to gain their independence; to aid and assist their prisoners to escape; to vote for no one for office who was not opposed to the further prosecution of the war; to encourage desertions from the union army; to protect the rebels in all things necessary to carry out their desires, even to the burning and destroying of towns and cities. Not only were they pledged to give aid, they were loud in their denunciations of union soldiers; applying to them all kinds of vile and abusive epithets; calling them "Lincoln dogs," "Lincoln hirelings," and declaring they ought to be taken to the blacksmith shop and have brass collars put on them, lettered 'Lincoln dogs," and all such insulting and tantalizing slang was used about the loyal soldiers. But amidst all these bombastic insults the rebels, and their southern allies, the copperhead organizatons, the soldier did not forget his loyalty, his duty to his country, to himself and to posterity, He patiently applied himself to the discharge of his duty. They fought for justice to all, and for the very life of the grandest government the world has ever known. From Ft. Henry, Donaldson and Shiloh to the capture of Vicksburg, inch by inch the ground was contested by as brave a force as ever fought for an unholy cause. But ever the old flag went steadily on, borne by Grant and his invincibl battallions. Then from Vicksburg to Lookout mountain and Missionary Ridge, wher no command was heeded by the boys in blue, but the one to advance; where the officers could not check them, and shot and shell could not make them falter, but onward and upward they bore the flag of their country over every obstacle, through the leaden rain of death, past frowning batteries, on to victory.

After the victories of Lookout mountain and Missionary Ridge came the triumphal march of General Sherman and his veterans from Atlanta to the sea. Breaking away from the commissary department and all communications with other divisions of the army they march boldly into the midst of the southern states where the enemy closed in behind them. It was to reach the sea or annihilation. Foe in front, in the rear and on either flank, and his subsistence to be secured from the hostile region which he marched. Only such gallant generals as Sherman could conceive and carry out such a brilliant campaign. It was the best planned and most brilliantly executed campaign of the war, and one which was fraught with greater damage to the rebellion than any other campaign of the war. It was a campaign without disaster, glorious and grand. And while Sherman was thus pressing Johnson and his army in the south, Grant was thundering away against Lee's veterans in the bloody and terrible battles of the Wilderness, Cold Harbor and from there to Appomatox.

While Grant and his army were fighting their way inch by inch to the capture of Vicksburg Burnside, Hooker and Meade with the gallant army of the Potomac were contending in the many bloody battles fields of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania with the flower of the rebel army under their chosen leader, General Lee, from Bull Run to Gettysburg, over the mountains, across rivers, deep gulches, through dense forests, they marched and fought with undaunted courage of veterans, never swerving from their grand purpose of defeating the army and driving it to its final and lasting doom. The last strong hold fell when Grant drove Lee out

Petersburg, and to his final capture at Appomattox.

When the last rebel rampant had surrendered, and the old flag again floated from its staff at Fort Sumpter, glad cheers went up from the union soldiers, in their hour of triumph, which were caught up by a rejoicing nation, and echoed and re-echoed from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The rejoicing over the success of the government was greater than had ever been heard in the land, since the surrender of the Brittish at Yorktown, at the close of the revolutionary war.

Richmond had surrendered, Grant had captured Lee's army at Appomattox, and the rebel congress had adjourned. The pretended officers of the confederate government, were fleeing from the country to hide away from the laws they had so wickedly violated.

The great conflct had closed. The rattle of musketry, the thundering of cannon, the rushing of charging squadrons, and the shouts of victory have died away in the silence of the rapidly receding past.

The stain of slavery had been erased from our national escutcheon. The heresy of secession throttled and buried in oblivion; the wisdom of our forefathers vindicated, and the perpetuity of the republic assured for ages to come. Great was the sacrifice by which all was accomplished, but greater still the fruits of the victory.

When rebellion had been suppressed, the brave men who had been in the service, many of them more than three years, where they had encountered all kinds of hardships incident to a soldier's life, on the march, in camp, or in the din and roar of battle, in the prison pens or in the hospital, returned to their homes and families to enjoy the

blessings of peace so dearly purchased by the services and sufferings of the soldiers.

But on the return of the survivors many a sad heart ached because the familiar figure of the dear husband, father, brother or son who had gone away in the full vigor of manhood, was not among them, but lay sleeping in a bloody and unknown grave. Peacefully sleeping, leaving his deeds of valor and his sufferings to be told by his surviving comrades, and his memory to be perpetuated in history.

While we are commemorating the memory and services of the brave and patriotic soldiers of the union army, we must not forget that they were not the only sufferers by reason of this cruel rebellion, The true and loyal women of the nation, who with brave, tender and generous hearts, courageously consented that husband, fathers, brothers, sons and lovers might leave happy homes, and their loved ones and go forth to meet the hostile foe of liberty and the union, there to do, and die if need be, for honor, liberty and their country, while they remained at home.

The parting with dear ones was a serious and terrible matter. The pure, brave and patriotic women, without a murmur bade farewell to the husband, son, father, brother or lover, with aching heart bestowing the parting kiss, perhaps the last on earth, and then standing silently in the door-way watching her loved one slowly pass down the lane and out of sight, knowing not whether he would return a living hero, or fill a soldier's grave in a hostile land. But she stands watching—A fearful battle raging in her heart, duty, with hosts arrayed upon one side, love and fear upon the other —watching with bated breath. the eager eye to

catch the last glimpse as he disappeared from view; and then with bleeding heart she turns to the silent chamber and there offers her fervent prayer that he may be able to do a soldier's duty, honor himself and help save an imperiled country. She asks that a merciful God will at all times be with her loved one, on the march, in the bivouac, and in the carnage of battle, and return him to her and her family again, after serving his country faithfully, bravely and honorably.

How earnestly those dear ones at home watch each mail for tidings of friends at the front; how they scanned the daily papers for news. Their thoughts were ever of those who had gone out to do battle for the right. How their hearts leaped with joy when they read the news of a union victory; and how their minds were filled with sadness when news of defeat reached them.

Their letters to the soldiers were as anxiously looked for, and were always filled with kind, tender words of encouragement and sympathy.

Not only did the loyal women give words of comfort to the soldiers in the field; many of them volunteered to go to the front as nurses of the sick and wounded and rendered valuable service in that duty. They were ever ready to do all in their power to relieve the suffering soldier in the hospitals. Their presence in the sick wards was like the visit of ministering angels. They alleviated the pain of the sick and soothed the brow of the dying soldier as he confided to them tender messages of love to be borne to friends at home. All honor to the loyal women; Let their loyalty, patient suffering, and deeds of mercy be ever cherished in our memory.

One there is, sleeping in yonder low tomb,
Worthy the brightest of flow'rets that bloom.
Weakness of womanhood's life was her part;
Tenderly strong was her generous heart.

Bravely she stood by the sufferer's side,
Checking the pain and the life-bearing tide;
Fighting the swift sweeping phantom of death,
Easing the dying man's fluttering breath.

Then when the strife that had nerved her was o'er
Calmly she went where wars are no more,
Voices have blessed her, now silent and dumb;
Voices will bless her long years to come.

Cover her over—yes, cover her over—
Blessings, like angels around her shall hover;
Cherish the name of that sister of ours,
And cover her over with flowers, beatiful flowers

Comrades, we are this day, in obedience to regulations, and custom commemorating the memory of noble and patriotic men, who gave their lives for the perpetuity of the best government devised by man. In all times, in all countries, and among all peoples, the men who have served as soldiers in defense of their government, have received the highest praise for their patriotism and heroic deeds.

Memorial day was established by Commander-in-chief John A. Logan, by the following formal order, at the national encampment held in Washington City, D. C. May 5, 1868:

Head-quarters Grand Army Republic.
Washington, D. C., May 5, 1868.

GENERAL ORDER NO. 11.

1. The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion; and whose bodies now lie in almost every village and

hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will, in their own way, arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.

We are organized comrades, as our regulations tell us, for the purpose, among other things, "of preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the soldiers, sailors and marines, who united to suppress the late rebellion." What can aid more to assure this resul than by cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead, who made their breasts a barricade between our country and its foes? Their soldier lives were the reville of freedom to a race in chains, and their deaths the tattoo of rebellious tyranny in arms. We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. All that the consecrated wealth and taste of the nation can add to their adornment and security is but a fitting tribute to the memory of her slain defenders. Let no wanton foot tread rudely on such hallowed grounds. Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of the reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no vandalism of avarice or neglect, no ravages of time testify to the present or the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic. If other eyes grow dull and other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remain to us.

Let us, then, at the time appointed gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with the choicest flowers of spring-time; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us, a sacred charge upon a nation's gratitude,—the soldier's and sailor's widow and orphan.

2. It is the purpose of the commander-in-chief

to inaugurate this observance with the hope that it will be keept up from year to year while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of his departed comrades,

He earnestly desires the public press to call attention to this order, and lend its friendly aid in bringing it to the notice of comrades in all parts of the country in time for simultaneous compliance therewith.

3. Department commanders will use every effort to make this order effective.

By command of JOHN A. LOGAN,
Cammander-in-chief.

N. P. CHIPMAN, Adjutant General.

It is fitting and proper that the old soldier of the war of the rebellion should be regarded with praise, and his services appropriately appreciated and rewarded.

But some who claim to be loyal say: "Why not, while honoring the memory and heroic sacrifices of the union soldier, pay the same respect to the heroism and bravery of the confederate soldier?"

I do not care to enter into any particular discussion of this matter at this time but desire to say briefly that I will never do anything which will show respect or honor to the acts of the men who voluntarily attempted to destroy this government.

I believe all loyal men should honor and respect patriotism and loyalty, and should now and forever censure disloyalty and rebellion. I have always believed that the union soldier, in his struggle to maintain the nation, uphold its flag and preserve the liberty of its citizens, was in the right, and fought for a holy cause. And I always believed that the rebel soldiers, who voluntarily went into the rebel army and there fought to destroy the national gov-

ernment and thus perpetuate the institutions of slavery, was engaged in a wicked and unholy cause, and that his conduct in that regard was highly offensive to all patriots, and as such deserves the everlasting censure and condemnation of all honest, patriotic men everywhere, under all circumstances.

Not only should we condemn the rebel soldier and his services as such, but we should hold in utter contempt the copperhead, and like allies of the rebellion.

I have a great deal more respect for the rebel soldier who fought bravely, than I can have for the contemptible Knight of the Golden Circle, and others of his kind.

Comrades, the duty you are performing today will soon be left to other hands. We went into the war in the "sixties" young men; to-day we are growing old. Many of our number who survived the war have been mustered out by the final mustering officer. Many of us are being mustered out each year, and it will be but a few brief years until the last old soldier of the rebellion will stand, leaning feebly on his staff, on the brink of the great river, looking across the pontoon which has been trodden by all his comrades—waiting patiently for the final order, that he too may cross the bridge, and there fall in line with the comrades that have gone before, there to complete the muster-roll on the other side, where the grand parade will be formed and the grand army will be forever united, not to do battle, but to receive their reward for the battles already fought, and victories won.

When the long years have crept slowly away,
E'en to the dawn of earth's funeral day;
When at the Archangel's trumpet and tread,

Rise up the faces and forms of the dead;
When the great world its last judgment awaits;
When the blue sky shall swing open its gates,
And our long columns march silently through,
Past the great Captain, for final review;
Then for the blood that has flown for the right,
Crowns shall be given, untarnished and bright;
Then the glad ear of each war-martyred son,
Proudly shall hear the good judgment, "well done."

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